Since this policy appeared completely out of the question after the July days, we had to choose between a government of the moderate Socialists and a coalition with the right. Most of the moderates in the Soviet felt, however, that their group alone would be unable to form a stable government. They realized that the July assault was not Lenin's last bid for power. His plan had failed this time only because his lieutenants had lacked courage at the decisive moment, before the tide turned in our favor. Lenin would let his men study the lessons of that defeat. When he hurled his armed followers against us again, they would not give us time to strike back. Lenin had disappeared from Petrograd but was getting ready for a new onslaught while in hiding somewhere in Finland. The rightist elements outside the government would soon provide him with slogans to rally his forces.

Moreover, we were in a shaky position with the Soviets. A government of moderate Socialists would be possible if it could count on the unanimous support of both Socialist parties through thick and thin. But there was a deep split within the majority parties. Not all leaders and rank-and-file members of the Menshevist and Socialist Revolutionary parties liked Tseretelli's firm policy against the Bolsheviks. To some of them, the Communists were not enemies but "misinformed comrades." They were unhappy about such measures as the appeal to the troops at the front or the use of armored cars to defend the Tauride Palace. Would they support a middle-of-the-way government in all measures it deemed necessary?

Thus there remained only one solution—a new coalition.

Since the Soviet leaders believed such a coalition the only way they had left, their prospective partners were able, despite their political weakness, to dictate their conditions. The non-Socialist groups declared, from the start, that they would not participate in a coalition without representation of the Cadets; the latter declared they would not join a government dependent on the Soviets. New difficulties developed after the President of the Provisional Government, Prince Lvov, resigned, and the rump Cabinet appointed Kerensky its head. This was a shrewd move on the part of the right elements remaining in the government. As an appointee of the rightist group, Kerensky was bound to become its puppet.

THE IMPASSE

On July 21 the rump Cabinet published a declaration of its policy, conforming in essential points with the demands of the moderate Socialists. Although the composition of the Cabinet was wholly unsatisfactory, the Executive Committee made an attempt to strengthen